

Faith Works

Our Mother Of Sorrows Catholic Church
(OMOS) - 1800 S. Kolb Road
Tucson, AZ 85710

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Let us introduce the contributors for this issue of the newsletter of the JustFaith group at OMOS:

- Richard Sherwood is a member of the Haiti ministry and a current member of the JustFaith formation. Richard has written beautifully about the need to support the rights and dignity of all people. He specifically speaks to our Haiti project and the wonderful work that Joan Martin does on our behalf.
- Katie Hirschboeck, also a member of the Haiti ministry and is the current chairwoman of the Christian Life Commission. Katie writes about our stewardship of God's creation. Katie is a member of the current JustFaith formation. She lives the ministry of everyday life through her work at the University of Arizona and in her parish activities.
- Chris Stogsdill is a member of our parish staff. She is responsible for the RCIA program and adult education classes. Chris is a vibrant part of our parish support system and is the quiet voice and support of many of our projects.

Each month's key theme highlights one of the points of the Pastoral Plan and one of the Seven Key Themes of Social Justice. The *Seven Key Themes of Catholic Social Teaching* and the *Consistent Ethic of Life* have been left as reference in pages 2 and 3.

March/2007 Women's History Month

- 1st** ♦ International
Day for the Abolition
of Death Penalty
- 5th** ♦ International
Day on Non-
Proliferation of
Nuclear Weapons.
- 8th** ♦ International
Women's Day
- 19th** ♦ St. Joseph,
Father of the Holy
Family
♦ Start of the war in
Iraq -2003
- 21st** ♦ International
Day for the
elimination of Racial
Discrimination
- 22nd** ♦ World Water
Day
- 24th** ♦ Annunciation
to the Blessed
Virgin Mary
♦ Archbishop Oscar
Romero's
assassination
(1980)
- 26th** ♦ Populorum
Progressio (1967)

March's Key Theme: Care for God's Creation / To Learn and Grow

By Katie Hirschboeck, Ph.D.

Few have had the privilege of viewing the entire Earth in one gaze like the astronauts. Instead we encounter God's gift of Creation in our everyday lives in bits and pieces that tend to be far removed from their natural origins: the plant or animal fibers that make up our blue jeans and sweaters; the sweat of the workers who stitched them together; the soil and seeds responsible for our corn flakes; the 98 tons of prehistoric, buried plant material – converted into oil over millions of years – that produced the gallon of gas an SUV can consume in one day's shopping trip.

Being called to live the Catholic Social Teaching theme of "Care for God's Creation" demands much more of us than praising God for the beauty of the desert or recycling aluminum cans or switching off lights – although important first steps. In his 1990 message "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation" Pope John Paul II referred to the ecological crisis as a *moral issue* and said: "Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of *everyone*." He further stated the importance "of giving attention to what the earth and its atmosphere are telling us: namely that there is an order in the universe which must be respected, and that the human person, endowed with the capability of choosing freely, has a grave responsibility to preserve this order for the well-being of future generations." Bluntly stated, every consumer choice we make today can be viewed as an act of love – or indifference – not only for those with whom we share the Earth's resources today, but also for those who will inherit the Earth we pass .

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Environmental Justice Program reminds us *the poor and disadvantaged tend to suffer in a disproportionate way* from environmental damage, pollution, depletion of resources and harmful working conditions. Environmental stewardship, therefore, also calls us to address the needs of the poor and vulnerable, and the rights of workers.

While the first key theme of Catholic Social Teaching – "Life and Dignity of the Human Person" – is viewed as the starting place and foundation for all the themes that follow; the seventh theme of "Care for God's Creation" can be viewed as the theme that brings together all the other themes in an overarching and all-embracing way.

Prayer/ Reflection

- What right do we have (in the US) to consume so much of what God gave to all humanity? What responsibilities do we have to share these gifts?
- How can our fasting during Lent increase our ecological awareness of the limits of earthly resources?
- Take a deep breath, you just inhaled countless atoms from the exhaled breaths of nearly every person currently living on Earth -- and of every person who has ever lived on Earth – even Jesus himself! Everything we touch, every breath we take, connects us in solidarity with all created life and resources on Earth.

April's Theme: On the Sacredness of Life and Dignity of the Human Person / To Seek and Embrace

Mary's Voice... By Chris Stogsdill

My first draft of this article spilled out quickly and easily - and angrily. My mind sped through the usual litany of all of the ways our culture refuses to honor the sacredness and dignity of human life from the first moment of conception to the last natural breath. After completing the article I felt strangely unsatisfied, sort of the way you feel when someone hurts you and you strike back; a quick surge of gratification followed by remorse.

I set the article aside and did what I should have done in the first place: *pray*. The Blessed Mother came to mind as someone to ask for help on this subject and more importantly, with the anger I was feeling in my heart. She quickly reminded my soul that love is the answer, not hatred. Her Son came to this world to offer himself as a gift of love. Nothing based on hatred or anger can be a part of him. A fresh breath of relief and peace filled my soul.

So what do we do about all the assaults on human life and dignity? Pray, she says. Pray and love. Pray and love and do what is in front of us, and most importantly, refusing to be consumed by the angry rhetoric and actions which only fuel hatred, violence and destruction of human lives and souls. We must be the love we profess. Jesus must be made present. We must be the peace, compassion, joy, love and justice for which we strive. All of life must become a prayer, an action, toward peace and holiness. It is Jesus Christ Our Lord who is that lasting peace: *when we fully submit our lives to him all else falls into place*.

Thank you, Blessed Mother, for reminding my stubborn heart once again that all is in the Father's hands. Help us to pray and love into existence, in heart, word and deed, "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done."

Prayer/Reflection:

- What is my view of the sacredness of life? Is there some life I deem lesser than others? Reflect on abortion, death penalty, terrorist acts, casualties of war (in both sides)
- The Lord's Prayer is Jesus' role model of what our prayer should be. Reflect on every word carefully chosen by Him.
- Is my prayer one of listening or talking? Am I *encouraging* a praying-relationship in which *I listen*?

April/2007

1st ♦ Passion (Palm) Sunday

3rd-10th ♦ Passover (Jewish)

5th ♦ Holy Thursday

6th ♦ Good Friday

7th ♦ World Health Day

8th ♦ Easter Sunday

11th ♦ Pacem in Terris

22nd ♦ Earth Day

24th ♦ Death of Cesar Chávez

27th ♦ Death of Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera, Human Rights Martyr

♦ Evangelization in Modern Day Asia

♦ First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, 1974

♦ "Ethical and Gospel Imperatives for Overcoming Dire Poverty and Hunger" issued by the National Conference of Bishops in Brazil (2002)

Consistent Ethic Of Life

"Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good." (The Gospel of Life, no. 87 by John Paul II).

Simply put, the teaching of our Catholic faith tells us that all life is sacred and must be protected, from the womb to the tomb. All people have a right to life. Violence against a human life for any reason is not a solution for any of the problems faced by our society.

Cardinal Bernardin stated that capital punishment, for example is not the same as abortion, but the issues are linked by the value and defense of life that is placed on both. "When human life is considered 'cheap' or easily expendable in one area, eventually nothing is held as sacred and all lives are in jeopardy."

**May/2007
Asian Heritage
Month**

1st ♦ St. Joseph the Worker

♦ Centesimus
Annus

3rd ♦ US National Day of Prayer
♦ World Press Freedom Day

5th ♦ The Challenge Of Peace – US Bishops (1983)

8th ♦ World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day

13th ♦ Mother's Day
♦ Octogesima Adveniens (1971)

15th ♦ Chair Of St. Peter, apostle (Feast)

17th ♦ Ascension of Christ

20th ♦ Franz Jägerstätter

22nd ♦ Africa Day

27th ♦ Pentecost

28th ♦ Memorial Day

May's Key Theme: Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect Them / To Lead and Form By Richard Sherwood

Katie Hirschboeck recently emailed an article from the New York Times to her fellow Haiti Committee members. The article describes Haiti as the poorest nation in the hemisphere. Amidst the extreme poverty of the country, the Times notes that there is a "slice of Caribbean bliss surrounded by security fencing with all-you-can-eat buffets." The blissful Labadie, Haiti with its beautiful beach, roaring jet skis, craft markets, and voodoo shows lures several thousand people from a Royal Caribbean cruise ship. It's a beautiful first-class resort. Tourists can visit other parts of the country by signing a waiver and presenting a passport, but most prefer the luxury of their paradise to seeing what lies outside its boundaries. The Times article quotes a St. Paul, MN visitor: "I don't want to see poverty. I'm on vacation. I don't want to think that these people don't have enough to eat."

As part of our course of study, Just Faith members continuously encounter stories where global societies function to the detriment of the impoverished and vulnerable. In some cases, power and wealth are used in an active manner to further their gain by abusing and transplanting those in need. But social justice also entails a lack of action. Conveniently overlooking what is just, is a glaring sin of omission. With eyes that do not see, ears that do not hear, and mouths that do not speak of the injustices and inequalities that exist around us, we live in a world that tolerates and turns a blind eye to the poor and vulnerable. Until we acknowledge and come face-to-face with the problem we cannot deal with it.

Jesus' ministry focused on the poor and marginalized. He challenged the laws and structures which created them. The disciples of Jesus formed a community that tried to practice what Jesus preached. They shared everything so that no one would want for anything. Working for the freedom and dignity of all people is at the very heart of what it means to be a Christian. The problem we have today is not how much we have, but what we do with what we have. Our individual ability to serve may be quite limited, but acting within a faith community provides us with much that can be accomplished in much the same way as the solidarity of Jesus' disciples. Our love of God and our faith call us to act.

I encourage you to join a group which promotes formation and works for peace, justice, and the sanctity of life. Just Faith, PCIC, the Haiti Committee, Peregrinos Juntos, The Blessed Nuno Society, and Habitat for Humanity are but a few within our own parish that help to establish hope and dignity for all God's people.

Prayer/Reflection

- ♦ Can we claim to love God without loving our neighbor?
- ♦ Can we vote for initiatives to take care of others' needs rather than vote against them to save money?
- ♦ Can we overcome the need to indulge ourselves rather than attempt to alleviate the suffering of others?
- ♦ Can we pray that the Holy Spirit will fill us with compassion and mercy that will lead to acts of service?

Seven Key Themes Of Catholic Social Teaching

1. **Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.
2. **Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.
3. **Rights and Responsibilities:** Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency.
4. **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** Mt 25:31-46 instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
5. **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected.
6. **Solidarity:** We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live.
7. **Care for God's Creation:** We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.

In this issue:

- Calculate Your “Ecological Footprint” and compare it with the average footprint of those in other nations
<http://www.myfootprint.org/>
- Our Mother of Sorrows Parish (Tucson, AZ) Christian Life Commission
<http://omosclc.org/>
- Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation 1990 World Day of Peace (Pope John Paul II)
<http://tinyurl.com/23548z>
- Renewing the Earth - An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching USCCB 1991
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/bishopsstatement.htm>
- Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good - USCCB 2001
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/globalclimate.htm>
- Read about Austrian Farmer Franz Jagerstatter
<http://www.catholicerald.com/royal/royal6.htm>
- USCCB’s Environmental Justice Program
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/background/index.html>
- The Good Life from a Catholic Perspective: The Problem of Consumption, by Monsignor Charles Murphy
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/background/articles/consumption.html>
- Pima County Interfaith Council’s Information Page
<http://arizonainterfaith.org/pciaff.html>

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